

The Time Divide: Work, Family, and Gender Inequality

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THE TIME SQUEEZE PUZZLE: Findings from *The Time Divide*

- Some Prevailing Paradoxes and Myths About Time Squeezes:

-- PARADOXICAL FINDINGS AND TRENDS:

GENERAL SENSE THAT Americans, as a whole, are working more than ever, feeling overworked and stressed as never before.

BUT: Some argue that there is actually a rise in leisure time, not overwork.

– CAUSE OF OVERWORK: The main culprit is a shift in cultural values, with individual workers preferring to pursue personal goals at work -- to detriment of families, communities, and children.

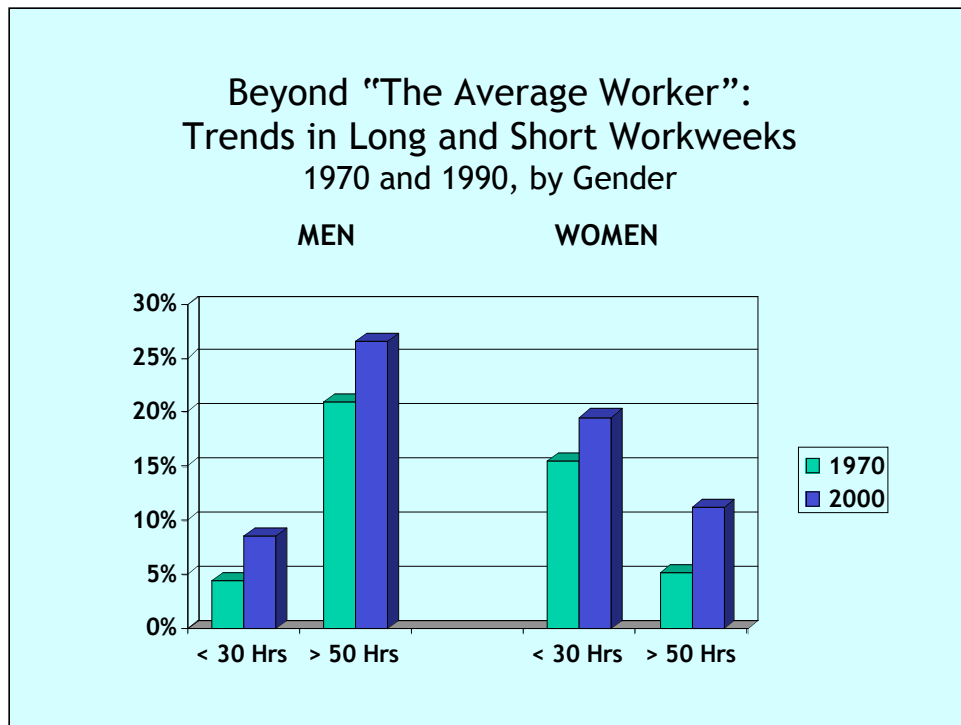
-- HOW TO CLARIFY THESE PARADOXES:

- While rise of time squeezes are real and widespread, their causes are more complex.

We need to look beyond paradigms based on “the average worker” and “a general culture of overwork”

to focus on how irreversible social transformations in nature of jobs and the structure of families have created:

- new *time divides* among American workers;
- new *time dilemmas* in American families;
- and a *growing mismatch* between the needs of workers and the structure of jobs.



BEYOND THE AVERAGE WORKER: THE RISE OF LONG AND SHORT WORK WEEKS

Little change in average workweek:

Length of average workweek hasn't changed much:

Contemporary Men: 43 hours/week

Contemporary Women: 37 hours/week

But most workers aren't average.

Increasing variation among workers.

Rising *bifurcation* in labor force,

with a growing proportion of workers putting in either excessively long workweeks (of 50 hours or more)

or relatively brief workweeks (of 30 hours or less).

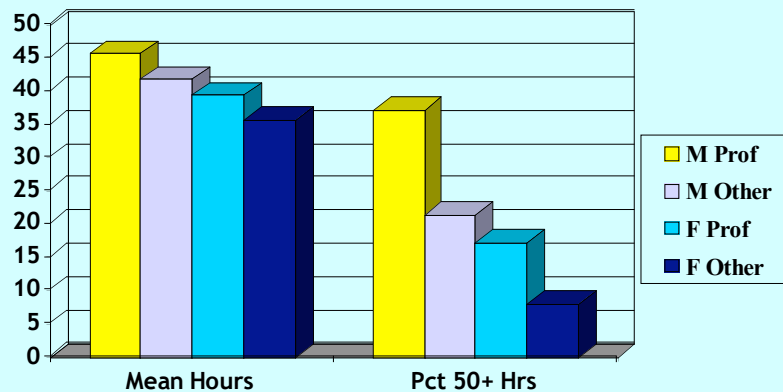
Overwork is not the whole story:

Instead, increasing inequality in working time,

With growth in two groups -- the overworked and the underemployed.

Who Are the Overworked Americans? Working Time for Professionals and Others

(Men and Women Workers, 2000 CPS)



WHO ARE THE OVERWORKED AMERICANS?

WORKING TIME FOR PROFESSIONALS AND OTHERS

Link between working time and occupational position:

Growing inequality in working time mirrors income & class inequality.

Professionals & managers face overwork, BUT

Less educated workers are more likely to be working less, struggling to find enough work.

Male Professionals: over 1/3 work 50+ hours

Other Male Workers: only 1/5 work 50+ hours

Female Professionals: about 1/6 work 50+ hours

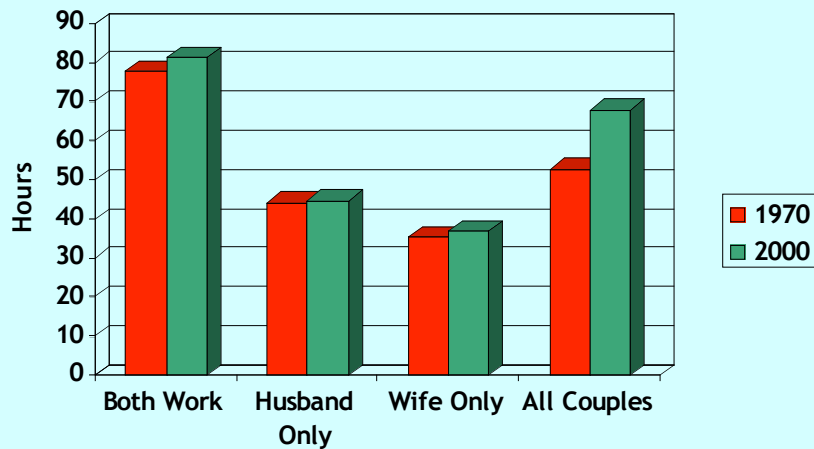
Other Female Workers: only 1/14 work 50+ hours

Overly demanding jobs are increasingly a problem for well-educated professionals,

BUT “under demanding” jobs are an increasing problem for the less well-educated.

Overworked Individuals or Families? Couples' Combined Working Time

1970 and 2000, Married Couples 18-64



OVERWORKED INDIVIDUALS OR OVERWORKED FAMILIES?

In addition, the transformation of family life has created time squeezes even for those who are not working more:

The combined working time among married couples illustrates this shift dramatically:

- Not much change in working time within family types:
- But significant rise in combined working time among all married couples:

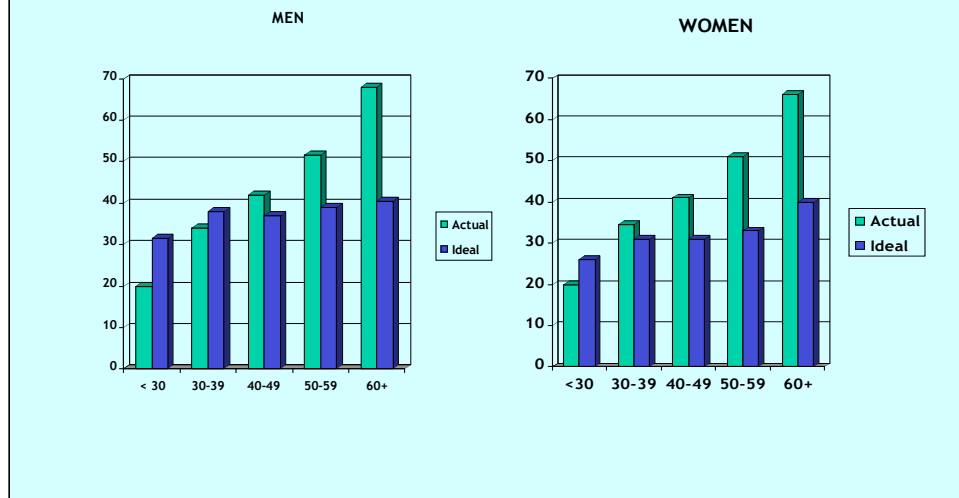
Why? Transformation of family life and women's emergence as family breadwinners.

- There are now more dual-earner couples than there were male-breadwinner households in 1970.
- Also, rise of Single Parents, who now comprise about 25% of hh's.

Result: Rise of dual-earning and single-parent households, where all adults hold a paid job and cannot depend on unpaid caretaker at home means that:

Whether or not *individuals* are working more, *families* are squeezed for time and support.

What Do Workers Want? Actual vs. Ideal Working Time



WHAT DO WORKERS WANT? A Gap between Actual & Ideal Working Time

These shifts do not reflect worker preferences – especially for overwork.

Instead, represent a rising mismatch between:

- job demands and reward structures, which equate time with work commitment,
- and workers’ needs and desires to balance work and personal life.

Among women and men:

- workers with long workweeks generally wish to work less,
- while those with relatively brief workweeks would like to work more.

Even as jobs have become divided into the “overdemanding” and the “underdemanding” there is growing agreement among workers:

-- Most workers aspire to a 35 to 40 hour workweek that offers a balance between work and rest of life.

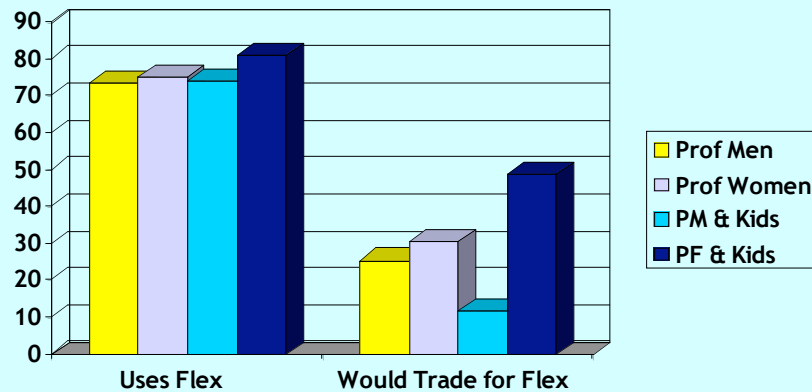
-- Gender gap is relatively small and probably declining:

Men – 38 hrs/wk

Women – 32 hrs/wk

Uses/Would Trade for Flexible Schedule

(National Study of Changing Workforce, 1997)



DO WORKERS WANT OR USE FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES? An Example

The use and desire for a flexible schedule,
Among professional women and men, with and without children.

- When flexibility is available, most use it.
 - men and women
 - parents and non-parents
- When flexibility is not available, a significant proportion would be willing to trade income to get it.
 - especially women with children, but other groups as well

No evidence that committed workers reject “family friendly” policies:

- Most workers would trade some income for more control, flexibility, and family support;

BUT

- most workers also believe that using family-friendly policies will jeopardize their future work prospects and thus fear the penalties for using them.